



Familiar melodies



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Chapter 1 by Danny Rerucha

A mysterious melody shakes you from your sleep. Your eyes, competing against the sun directly overhead, struggle to focus. A cool breeze envelopes your body, and you realize you have been sleeping outside.

Chapter 2 by Windlion



The soft feelings of a good dream fade away as memories return.

There was a party. Yes. Nice one, too. Possibly you were a bit too loud towards the end.

There was a car. Everyone was laughing, and so were you.

The hill. You know the hill, because your neighbor got huffy about its unmowed condition ... a little while ago?

You remember sitting down to rest before climbing the rest of the way up to the house.

So here you are. Pretty comfortable, all considering.

If it wasn't for the tree root digging into your side and the snake slithering past, you might even drift back off again.

Round head? Check. Non venomous. Back to sleep.

Chapter 3 by Windlion

Reality politely asks you to float.

The cool breeze is taking a break. Also, your skin is troubled with an unpleasant crawling sensation.

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On investigation this appears to be caused by a large colony of ants that have invaded your personal space, possibly attracted by whatever sugary beverages soaked most of your clothing last night.

Your intended gazelle-like leap to an upright position is thwarted by an explosion of pain in your cranium that you recognize as the worst hangover you have ever experienced. Clutching your head, you stagger forward, trip on the tree root and fall on top of the anthill.

Undeterred, you crawl up the hill to your house, alternately cursing Ants, Gravity, and Free Will.

A few restorative hours later, showered, disinfected, and fed with an emergency ration of graham crackers, you collapse into your armchair and close your eyes.

There was someone you promised to call. Who was it?

Fortunately, your phone is within reach.

You scroll through the list of missed calls and texts. Almost all are of the wow-what-a-party and are-you-all-right variety that you can answer at work tomorrow.

The one from Mattie asking in an odd tone of voice if you meant it, though, is troubling.

You do recall slipping away into a corner with Mattie. For almost a year, the two of you have been enjoying stepping out to kiss and share other expressions of mutual admiration when parties reached a boring point.

You recall an expression on Mattie's face you have never seen before.

You just can't remember what you said.

Chapter 4 by Windlion



Nobody at the office is completely recovered, which is fortunate as it gives you a reason to run late on collating the quarterly cost allocation figures.

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Then you turn a corner in the cubicle maze and nearly collide with Mattie going the other way.

"Hey," she says, and by her voice tone you cleverly surmise that she is thinking of holding you at fault for a Relationship Transgression.

"Uh, hey," you reply. "Sorry I didn't return your voicemail ... I was kind of beat, didn't check my phone until I got, well, cleaned up."

She snorts. "You were kind of a mess ... but kind of a cute one."

Still on the edge of trouble here — "So. We should talk some more at lunch?"

"Yeah. It's no big thing, just want to be clear about where we're at."

"I'd like that, too."

Same expression as the one you remember from the party. Shit.

Did whatever you said make her think that you wanted to spend more time with her, or did you say that you wanted to find other kissing buddies?

And how do *you* feel about those possibilities on this chill, somewhat hungover need-to-lie-down-for-a-week morning?

Chapter 5 by Windlion



Some intelligence gathering seems in order. You seek out Mattie's best friend.

"Uh, hey, Clio, got a minute?"

"Bert! Ohmigawd, I can't believe you made it into work today, how are you feeling?"

"Reasonably well, actually, with one teeny little problem I wondered if you could help me with? I

have a feeling I might have offended Mattie somehow but well, there's these blank spots in my memory ..."

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"Ahh, and you are looking good! ... I might have done?"

Warning alert! Clio now has that same mysterious expression on her face.

Write a draft for chapter 6 of 8 (1 draft)

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